



Highlights of [GAO-05-4](#), a report to the Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, U.S. Senate

### Why GAO Did This Study

The goal of most American workers—a well-paying job—will be increasingly linked to adequate training in the coming years. Such training will be key to competing for the 21 million new jobs the Department of Labor projects will be created in the 2002 to 2012 period. People already in, or seeking to enter, the workforce often turn to the nation’s more than 1,100 public community colleges and technical schools to obtain needed skills. Nearly 6 million students were enrolled in for-credit courses in the fall term 2000 and millions more participated in noncredit courses at these schools. GAO was asked to examine: (1) the extent to which community colleges and technical schools are involved in remedial education and workforce training efforts as well as academic preparation activities; (2) how state and federal funding support these academic and training efforts; and (3) what is known about schools’ efforts to measure outcomes, including the rates at which students graduate, transfer to 4-year institutions, pass occupational licensing exams, and gain employment.

The scope of our review included a Web-based survey of 1,070 public community colleges and technical schools, 758 (71 percent) of which completed the survey.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-4](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-4).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact David D. Bellis at (415) 904-2272 or [bellisd@gao.gov](mailto:bellisd@gao.gov).

# PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

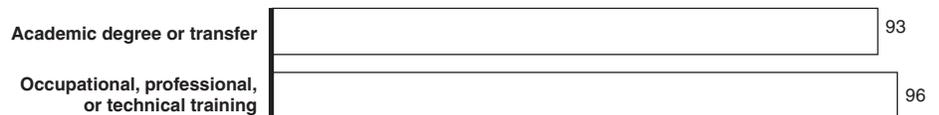
## Most Schools Use Both Credit and Noncredit Programs for Workforce Development

### What GAO Found

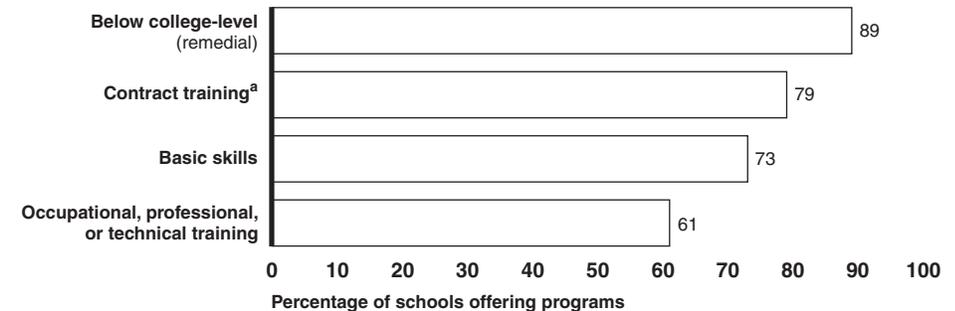
The majority of community colleges and technical schools are offering a broad spectrum of academic and training programs—everything from traditional courses for degree-seeking students to remedial education and contract training customized for individual employers. In addition, 61 percent of schools offer noncredit occupational, professional, or technical training.

**Prevalence of Types of Programs at Community Colleges and Technical Schools in the Fall Term of 2002**

#### For-credit programs



#### Noncredit programs



Source: GAO survey of community colleges and technical schools, 2004.

<sup>a</sup>Contract training data are for the 2002-03 academic year.

States have long provided the greatest share of funding for public community colleges—between 40 and 45 percent of schools’ total revenue, while federal funding, exclusive of student financial assistance, has been much smaller—about 5 percent. Most states provide more funding for credit programs than noncredit programs.

Most community colleges and technical schools track some education and employment outcomes for their students, but differences in state reporting requirements preclude aggregating these outcomes nationally. However, national studies of representative samples or cohorts of students conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics show that between half and two-thirds of community college students seeking some type of academic or occupational credential succeed in transferring to a 4-year institution or earning a degree, license, certificate, or diploma within 6 to 8 years of initiating studies. GAO’s survey indicated that more than half of students enrolled in remedial and 3 types of basic skills courses completed them successfully.